



I Saw It on the 6 O'Clock News

Student Scripts

Bud Basswood: Thanks Maple. Well the big party is over. Wisconsin has just become a state. It's 1848. Wisconsin is covered with trees. These forests are coming in handy. Why, the forests are helping build the state. They provide lumber, jobs, and money for Wisconsin. I'm standing here under one of the big white pines. Tim Cruise is with me today. Tim works for the lumber company. His job is to walk the land and determine how many white pines there are to cut down for lumber. Tim, what can you tell us about these forests?

Tim Cruise: What can I say Bud? There is one heck of a lot of trees here. These forests are endless. Last summer I walked for 2 months and never ran out of trees. I did run from a bear once though. White pine's the main tree I am looking for. There are lots of other trees that we don't cut. Down in the swamps the trees are so thick, it is dark and scary. I done run into more than one bear in there. My guess is we'll never run out of pine in these woods.

Bud Basswood: Well Maple, as you can see there is a heck of a lot of trees out here. Lumber is becoming a big business, but looks like there are plenty of trees.

Blossom Bloomer: Unbelievable site, not a tree for as far as one can see. Well it's 1905 and there is nothing but stumps in the background. There once was a great forest that stood here, but it was cut down some years ago. Ole Hasbeen lives down the road. He was a lumberjack that cut down the trees on this very spot. Ole, what happened to the forest that once stood here?

Ole Hasbeen: Yah Blossom, I cut the trees. Yah, there was a forest here. Me and the other boys cut it down. You betcha. I think it was about 1895 by golly when we cut the big white pines. Yah, those trees were something. They were so big. Ya know, when a tree fell over, the whole ground shook. Yah, you betcha it looked different around here once they were gone. Just stumps, some trees, and piles of treetops left behind. We called that stuff slash. When that slash got dry, it burned real easy. I seen fire just jump from tree to tree that was left. That's what killed the trees we didn't cut down.

Blossom Bloomer: As one stands here today, it is hard to believe a forest once grew here. Maple, this land doesn't look like it is worth much.

Clay Crop: Maple, it's 1925 and there has been a lot of activity here in the Northwoods. Many a family has moved here over the last 25 years to try their luck at farming. Some are doing well. Others are calling it quits. Seems the soils aren't great in many areas. I'm at the Hans Rockpicker farm. They are packing their possessions in their wagon as we speak. Hans, why are you moving?

Hans Rockpicker: We have had enough. My family has worked this darn land for the last 10 years. Busted our knuckles and for what. First it was pulling the stumps, then moving all the stones. When we finally got some land cleared, fire spread from down the road and burned our log house. We rebuilt our house. What a waste. This sand is too dry. Shoot nothing grows well here. If it weren't for winter work in the woods, Betsy Sue and the kids would have starved to death. We figure if the farm can't make it, we just as well work at something else.

Clay Crop: Maple, it's a sad story. Hans tells me that many of his neighbors have already quit farming. I asked him what they plan to do with the land. He said, what can you do with it? No one wants to buy it. We are just leaving it behind. The county will take it when we don't pay our taxes.

Sally Controversy: Well Maple, it's 1933. It has been wild here at the court house. The county board has just voted to take this land and replant it to trees. This has been a hot debate. Many people think this is down right crazy. Some remember all the work done getting rid of the trees. Others feel that all this land is good for is growing trees. Standing here with me is Forest Proponent. Forest is supportive of this idea of replanting the forest.

Forest Proponent: Sally, I don't care what some people say. This is the best thing for the land. What is the county supposed to do with the land? If we replant it to trees, eventually the county can sell the trees. That will help fund other things in the county. One thing by gosh we know for sure is that this used to be forest. With a little help, it will be again. My guess is this will catch on with other counties too. What else are they going to do with this land?

Sally Controversy: Well, you heard it Maple. This county land is going to be replanted. From now on this land will be called county forest. Wonder how long before other counties do the same?

Nat Forest: Maple, the US Forest Service has been buying land from the counties since 1928. It's now 1933 and today they have announced the creation of two national forests in Wisconsin. They will be called the Nicolet National Forest and the Chequamegon National Forest. The goal for these two forests is to provide forest resources for the nation. John Treebark is a neighbor of the Nicolet National Forest.

John Treebark: By gum I don't know what to think of this. Folks worked mighty hard turning that spot into farmland. Seems crazy that the government is going to plant trees again. For heavens sakes, who do they think is going to replant all this land? I suppose if they can get everything planted, it will be good. Lumber companies moved out near 20 years ago. Maybe someday we will have big timber again and jobs. Right now a lot of our lumber is being shipped in from out west. You know. Places like Montana and Idaho.

Nat Forest: Maple, the locals do not know what to make of this, but sounds like the Forest Service has a big job ahead of it replanting all of the trees.

Mildred Hardtimes: Maple, this line that I am standing in is for a job with a new program sponsored by the US government. It's 1933 and President Franklin Roosevelt's new work program is causing quite a stir. The program is called the Civilian Conservation Corps or the CCC. Kenny Nojob is one of those in line. Kenny, what's all the excitement about?

Kenny Nowork: This here line is a job line. They is promising us a job for waiting in this line. I will soon be able to buy the beans for the family. A job, a job, a job! I can't wait to get back to work. CCC crews are being formed to help take care of our natural resources.

Mildred Hardtimes: Maple, spirits are running high. With the chance for a job, everyone here has great hope.

Sonya Sawyer: Well Maple, breakfast just got over and the men are heading out to plant trees. There are a lot of men here and I hear they are getting a lot of work done. Standing with me is Buster Foreman. Buster is one of the crew bosses. Buster what can you tell us about this new program?

Buster Foreman: By golly Sonya, we are a putting America back to work. Here in Wisconsin we have 75 camps. We will be employing about 75,000 men. All have been without a job. Timing seems to be right. We got lots of work waiting for us. Why we got a whole forest that needs to be replanted. Dang fires need a fighting too.

Sonya Sawyer: Maple, Buster said some crews will be building forest and park buildings and trails. Others will be working to improve the forests. Everyone seems to be staying very busy around here.

Twiggy Spud: Thanks Maple. I am standing in one of the places where many of the tree seedlings are grown. The Trout Lake Nursery was started in 1911 to provide trees for the replant. In those days people thought the state was nuts. All the work that people did to clear the land, why would someone want to plant trees? By the 1930's Trout Lake was not the only nursery. The State had other nurseries and so did the Forest Service. Standing here with me is Steve Greenthumb. Steve works here at the nursery. Steve what can you tell me about these trees.

Steve Greenthumb: Well Twiggy, you are looking at young red pines. These trees are two years old and will be planted in the next few years. We plant a bunch of seeds in rows. With a little watering and weeding during the summer months, by gosh we grow trees. Next spring we will dig the trees old enough to plant. Those boys in the field will be planting them. You know, it is going to take a lot of trees.

Twiggy Spud: Wow that is a lot of trees in one small area. Maple, as you can see, nurseries can produce a lot of trees in just a few years.

Julie Yesterday: I am standing here at a very special place. This place is called Trees for Tomorrow. It is 1944 and 9 paper mills have got together and organized this program. The purpose of this program is to show landowners that they can make money by planting their land to trees and taking care of their forests. Donna Roadalong is here with her husband at a workshop for landowners. Donna what takes place here at Trees for Tomorrow?

Donna Roadalong: Well Julie, they have been teaching us a lot of stuff. Things like how to grow trees on our property. We didn't know how to get started, but now we are ready to replant our property. You wouldn't believe it. They have a great program called the 2 for 1 Plan. They will give 2 seedlings to people for every 1 tree they cut down. They have taught us that forests are a renewable resource and with our help we will have forest products years to come.

Julie Yesterday: Maple this is quite a place. They have their own professional foresters here and are helping a lot of people.

Susie Spark: That is right Maple. It is 1944 and World War II continues. As part of the war effort, we at home have to guard our natural resources. Seems there is a new bear in the woods doing just that. He wears a forest ranger hat and blue jeans. His name is Smokey Bear.

Smokey Bear: Say, Susie, do you know that care will prevent 9 out of 10 fires? It's true. Careless people who don't put out their campfires, cigarettes, and matches cause many fires. Only you can prevent forest fires! That's why I carry a bucket and shovel sometimes.

Susie Spark: Smokey, I bet you will become a big star someday. You are cute! Maple, this bear knows his stuff.

Ellie Elm: That's right Maple, Dutch Elm Disease has rapidly taken many trees victim in this community and in communities throughout the country. In spite of valiant efforts to save these trees, the disease continues to win this battle. People like Citizen Sad have grown fond of the trees and find it difficult to say goodbye. Citizen, could you share more about what you have experienced here in Milwaukee?

Citizen Sad: It has been a sad journey Ellie. It all began in 1956 when Dutch Elm Disease was found in several of our street trees. The city did everything it could to save the trees. They even reduced the police and fire budgets to pay for the fight. We have sprayed pesticides and injected toxins. But nothing has worked. Now when I look at our city streets, I just want to cry.

Ellie Elm: I can understand why you feel that way, Citizen. It is now 1967 and this year alone, the city has lost 19,000 trees. Maple, this is certainly a story with a sad ending.

Tree A. Ward: Maple, I am standing on a beautifully tree lined street here in Madison, Wisconsin. This year in 1989, our state capital just became one of 39 Wisconsin cities to be named a Tree City USA. One of the people who helped make that possible is here with me. Val N. Teer has dedicated many hours of her personal time caring for Madison's urban trees. Val, what does it mean that Madison is now a Tree City USA?

Val N. Teer: In 1976, the National Arbor Day Foundation began recognizing communities who care about their urban forests. In that first year, five Wisconsin communities and 37 others nationwide were recognized. The Tree City USA program promotes the benefits of trees and encourages people to support healthy urban forests. I volunteer because I value the beautiful trees in our city.

Tree A. Ward: That's fantastic Val! As I understand, cities in the Tree City USA program celebrate Arbor Day, keep track of tree planting, care and removal, and set money aside to take care of urban trees. Maple, I am sure it took a lot of cooperation to get all those pieces in place.

Tony Oak: Maple, although not mentioned much yet in this newscast, the Wisconsin Division of Forestry has played a key role in the replanting and management of our forests. It is 2003 and the Division of Forestry is preparing to celebrate their 100th birthday in 2004. I have with me Cindy Info, a spokesperson for the Division. Cindy, tell us about the role the Division of Forestry has played over the last 100 years.

Cindy Info: Well, that is right Tony. The Division of Forestry has worked hard since 1904 to reestablish and take care of Wisconsin's forests. During this time, we purchased lands and set them aside as state forests. We have built several nurseries over the years. Currently we have 3 state nurseries that produce about 20 million seedlings a year. We have staff that fights fires. Our foresters provide help to landowners too.

Tony Oak: You are right Cindy. The Division of Forestry has played a big role in making our forests as they are today. Maple, without the efforts of this group, I don't think we would have the forests we have today.